

In the Claims

Claims 1-17 (Cancelled)

Claim 18 (Currently amended): ~~A method for inducing flowering of strawberry plants wherein said strawberry plants are grown in a controlled temperature environment, wherein said method comprises growing said strawberry plants for a first growing period of at least six weeks under photoperiodic conditions and at a daytime temperature which reaches at least 30° C, and wherein said daytime temperature is reduced during a second growing period under photoperiodic conditions, after said first growing period, to about 25° C~~ A method for conditioning containerized, vegetative strawberry plants to induce early flowering upon transplantation, said method comprising:

(a) growing said vegetative, containerized strawberry plants in a controlled-temperature environment for a first growing period of at least six weeks, under periodic light, and at a daytime temperature which reaches at least 30° C;

(b) growing said vegetative, containerized strawberry plants in a controlled-temperature environment for a second growing period under periodic light, after said first growing period, wherein said daytime temperature is reduced to 25° C or lower, thereby conditioning said vegetative, containerized strawberry plants for flower induction; and

(c) transplanting said vegetative, conditioned strawberry plants, wherein said vegetative, conditioned strawberry plants are thereby induced to flower at a time of year that is not normally possible for the species of said strawberry plants in the absence of said conditioning.

Claim 19 (Currently amended): The method, according to claim 18, wherein said method further comprises reducing the photoperiod duration of each light period to which said plants are exposed during said second growing period compared to said first growing period.

Claim 20 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 19, wherein the duration of the photoperiod each light period is reduced by at least fifty percent.

Claim 21 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 19, wherein the duration of the photoperiod is reduced to a photoperiod of each light period is reduced to about six to ten hours.

Claim 22 (Previously added): The method according to claim 18, wherein said first growing period comprises about 6 weeks to about 10 weeks.

Claim 23 (Previously added): The method according to claim 18, wherein said method further comprises growing said strawberry plants at a nighttime temperature that reaches at least 30° C during said first growing period.

Claim 24 (Previously added): The method according to claim 23, wherein said nighttime temperature reaches at least 30° C during said first growing period and said second growing period.

Claim 25 (Previously added): The method according to claim 23, wherein said nighttime temperature is reduced during said second growing period compared to said first growing period.

Claim 26 (Currently amended): The method according to claim 19, wherein the photoperiod duration of each light period is reduced from about 12 hours in the first growing period to 6 to 10 hours in the second growing period.

Claim 27 (New): The method according to claim 18, wherein said daytime temperature is reduced during the second growing period under periodic light, after said first growing period, to about 15 °C to 20 °C.

Claim 28 (New): The method according to claim 18, wherein said daytime temperature is reduced during the second growing period under periodic light, after said first growing period, to about 25 °C.

Claim 29 (New): The method according to claim 18, wherein said vegetative, conditioned strawberry plants are induced to flower in November or December.

Claim 30 (New): The method according to claim 18, wherein said vegetative, conditioned strawberry plants are induced to flower in Florida, in November or December.

Claim 31 (New): The method according to claim 18, wherein said conditioned strawberry plants are induced to flower at a time other than March or April.

Claim 32 (New): The method according to claim 18, wherein said transplanting comprises removing said conditioned strawberry plants from their containers and placing said conditioned strawberry plants in conditions that are not conducive to flowering in the absence of said conditioning.

Claim 33 (New): A method for conditioning containerized, vegetative strawberry plants to induce early flowering when subsequently transplanted, said method comprising:

(a) growing said vegetative, containerized strawberry plants in a controlled-temperature environment for a first growing period of at least six weeks, under periodic light, and at a daytime temperature which reaches at least 30° C; and

(b) growing said vegetative, containerized strawberry plants in a controlled-temperature environment for a second growing period under periodic light, after said first growing period, wherein said daytime temperature is reduced to 25° C or lower, thereby conditioning said vegetative, containerized strawberry plants to flower, upon transplantation, at a time of year that is not normally possible for the species of said strawberry plants in the absence of said conditioning.